The early bird catches the worms  KATHRYN LAWSON

Nematodirus infection passes from one lamb crop to the next year’s crop. Before they can hatch, the eggs have to undergo a period of cold weather followed by warmer temperatures of 10°C or more. If these conditions occur over a short period of time, triggering a mass hatch, and it coincides with the time when lambs are starting to take significant amounts of grass, the result can be devastating.

During the cold winter months, it is likely that we will see a late hatch and that many of the eggs will remain in a dormant state until the first warm period of the spring. This resulted in one of the highest incidences of nematodirosis in recent years. Most nematodes that are passed within the lamb crop will be nematodirus species. The situation seen this year resulted in a high proportion of Nematodirus infections, which can be seen in Table 1.

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Monthly Offers

The best control method is to avoid grazing lambs on pasture used not affected. May and June usually see by far the greatest amount of disease to take significant amounts of grass, the result can be devastating.

The most important factor controlling resumption of ovulation activity post-calving in cow body condition at calving. Although, increasing the energy fed levels of cows that cake in poor body condition in the immediate post partum period has no effect on cows coming bulling. So cows need to be in the correct body condition at calving. On average, a beef suckler cow calving in moderate to good BCS will have an anestrus period of 50-60 days. Thin cows, especially 1st calves which are still trying to grow and sucking their first calf will be at risk of having anestrus.

After calving it is normal for cows to have a period of time when they don’t come bulling (anestrus). In beef cows the two main factors which influence the length of the anestrus period are: One is the time spent by the calf, and the second one is the body condition at calving. As calves get older and suckle less frequently this effect wanes and the ovaries become active.

The second most important factor controlling resumption of ovulation activity post-calving is cow body condition at calving. The length of the anestrus period is influenced by the level of body condition at calving. In cattle, the ovaries become active when the cow is in moderate to good body condition (BCS 4-5). Underconditioned cows have longer anestrus periods, which may be due to an increase in the length of the follicular phase or a decrease in the length of the luteal phase. Cows that calve during the first month of the calving period, in good BCS are likely to be cyclic by the time the bull is introduced to the herd. If the cow has been left to graze for a day or two after calving, her milk production is increased, which may help to stimulate ovulation.

Spinning around or set in ways

PETER HARLAND

Grass growth has been very slow this spring, with low temperatures, cold winds, frosts and snow. Some were wondering when things will "get going". With grass a bit tight so far early season it might be a good time to think about a grazing strategy. You may think that rotational grazing, paddock systems, strip grazing and back farming are the tools of the New Zealand style farmer, but elements of these systems can be adapted very successfully by English beef and sheep farmers.

Grass yields using a rotational paddock system can be increased by 90% over a conventional set stocking system. Realistically we can provide a 20-30% increase in milk production for the same amount of feed. The quality of grass, grazed in a rotational system is also higher than that in set stocked. The grazing system is extended, worm burdens can be reduced, weed species and selection grazing can be combated and animal dung and urine is distributed more uniformly.

Every farm is different, and there is no “one way fits all”, but for example, take a field that would normally last your stock around about one month when set stocked. Divide the field into four paddocks with electric fences and move the stock at a time. Start grazing when the grass has two to three leaves per plant and move the stock to the next paddock when grazed down to around a couple of inches. You will generally find, in the first half of the summer, that by the time you’ve grazed the 4th paddock the 1st one is ready for grazing again.

Electric fences are a lot easier and more reliable than they used to be, and polystyrene pipe and connectors are also a lot better, making the whole system easier than ever, to have a go and see how you come on!

For Sale & Wanted

Borries’s farm shop. Home-made jam, chutneys, marmalades, sauces & cakes for sale. Tel: 01423 780207 or e-mail annexwaxlamb@yahoo.co.uk

S.sodalis. Aperian sheep, not weaned, 3 months old, £750. Tel: 01765 689091 (Bob)

IBR, Lepto, Johne’s Free. £80. Also, angus stock bull £6 (Bob)

Limousin Bulls. Tel: John Swallow 07713 322945 or 01645 597393

Angus bull for sale or hire. Peter Turnbull 01347 868236 or 07836 370253

2.5% drench Albenil cattle & sheep £10.60 (John)

Pedigree dog food assorted 12 pack, for both food buy 12.5kg, get 2kg free

Angus bulls for sale or hire. Peter Turnbull 01347 868236 or 07836 370253

Pedigree dog food assorted 12 pack, for both food buy 12.5kg, get 2kg free

Offers

Pedigree dog food assorted 12 pack, 12 cans for the price of 10

WANTED Bob farmers type lamb adopter.

Kuhn mower GT 165 – 2 drum. New Holland 276 hayliner baler £1275 for both or will split. Tel: 01765 488202

Angus bulls for sale or hire. Peter Turnbull 01347 868236 or 07836 370253

Slitting and over-seeding in one pass. Sward lifting, slurry services. All areas covered. Tel. Nick 07716 467 460 or Graham 01765 689 039
Unfortunately, coccidiosis is likely to be a particular problem this year. Due to adverse weather conditions some ewes have suffered with poor colostrum supply resulting in compromised immune systems in their lambs. Poor grass growth has meant that milk production hasn't been so good leading to weak lambs. Wet muddy fields and/or extended housing periods can also increase the risk from coccidiosis.

Coccidiosis is a protozoan infection which develops in the small and large intestines. It is most often seen in young lambs of about 4-7 weeks of age that have been exposed to a high level of egg challenge.

This year nematodirus is also likely to be an issue, concurrent nematodirus/coccidiosis infection can exacerbate the severity of coccidiosis and lambs may need to be dosed with a suitable anthelmintic, as well as an anti-coccidial drug.

You can also help to prevent infection with good hygiene and husbandry. An adequate intake of colostrum will assist the lamb in coping with coccidial infection. Try to keep lambing pens and feeding troughs clean, dry and off the ground.

Feed Focus: Jameson HDF dairy cakes
GraHam JAmesOn

Our HDF dairy cakes complement good quality grazing, making sure you get the most from your grassland. Our HDF range work well in situations where starch inclusion needs to be limited to avoid upsetting the rumen, yet maintaining energy density and therefore milk yield.

Energy is still supplied at high levels, but higher levels of digestible fibre are included using distillers, sugarbeet, wheatfeed, & malt residues. Digestible fibre sources allow energy intakes to be increased without increasing the risk of acidosis associated with high starch feeds. Our HDF cakes assist in maintaining an optimum rumen pH, supporting rumen function in the same way as unprotected sources like vegetable fibre.

High metabolizable energy (13.2 MJ/kg DM) provides the cow with the best opportunity for a successful lactation. HDF + megalac cakes have been so good leading to weak lambs. Wet muddy fields resulting in compromised immune systems in their lambs. Some ewes have suffered with poor colostrum supply which means that milk production hasn't been so good leading to weak lambs. Wet muddy fields and/or extended housing periods can also increase the risk from coccidiosis.

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North sheep cakes

Join us at The National Sheep Association’s North Sheep 2013 on Wednesday, 5 June at Cripple Head Farm, Backworth, Habin, Northumberland. North Yorkshire. There’s lots to see and activities to join in with, try your hand at selecting & grading lambs with EBLEX. Cheer on your ‘favourite’ auctioneers & sheep buyers from Skipton & Otley auctions as they go head-to-head in the Ready Steady Cook competition. To find out the latest scientific research, you can attend seminars, such as “Scab, Schmallenburg & Fluke”. For young farmers there’s stockjudging and the young shepherd of the year competition.

Eating ‘em alive
Dr Ruth Lawson

Wherever possible avoid grazing young and older lambs on the same pasture and in particular on fields which have carried ewes and lambs within the previous 2-3 weeks.

Oral and “in feed” treatments are available for the control and prevention of coccidiosis. Oral anticoccidial treatment, such as Vecoxan should be administered as a positive de-oxanosis has been confirmed. Deccox can be added to Intensive Lamb Creep pellets provided a prescription is obtained from your vet.

Ask us about Vecoxan or Deccox in feed.

Early finishing of spring lambs
Dr Ruth Lawson

For early lambing flocks, high growth rates are critical with lambs often weaned at 4 to 6 weeks old. For rapid weight gains, creep diets must be palatable, high in energy and must contain adequate protein, minerals & vitamins. The amount of creep feed consumed by lambs at 2 to 6 weeks of age is particularly affected by the palatability of the ration, in terms of both composition and form.

Concentrates need to be highly palatable for young lambs, with growth rates of 200 to 400 g/day allowing lambs to reach slaughter weight at 12 to 14 weeks of age. Considerable benefits in terms of growth rate may be achieved by the inclusion of high quality ingredients. However, care must be taken to avoid rapid weight gain as fat in early weaned lambs impairs mammary gland development and milk production.

Neville Kitching farms in partnership with his cousin (Andrew Breckon) at Winton near Northallerton, North Yorkshire and finishes lambs for the Spring market. The early lambing flock consists of 160 Dorsets and continental cross mules. In a normal year, the majority of the Dorsets will tupped for a second time. Neville says whether due to Schmallenburg virus or the poor summer, a number were tupped for a second time. Neville prefers to feed his lambs ewe hay as he thinks he gets less problems with prolapses compared with previously feeding wetter silages. Also, listeria isn’t a problem when hay is fed. Lambs suckle the ewes for 7 weeks and ewes are fed Evedale Gold pellets twice a day during this time. In the run up to weaning, concentrate for the ewes is reduced and they are only fed once a day.

On the last four days prior to weaning, concentrate feeding of ewes is stopped and ewes begin to dry off. After weaning, ewes go onto minimal grazing to help them dry off. Lambs get ad-lib Intensive Lamb Creep pellets and wheat straw. As lambs stay indoors, Neville says worming isn’t necessary, neither is vaccination for clostridial disease.

Neville says marketing of lambs is extremely time critical with the majority of lambs hitting the Easter market. However, the hoggy market greatly affects trade for spring lambs, so it becomes a delicate balancing act. Lambs are sold at 12-14 weeks either deadweight or through a local farm shop.

Studies have shown that the inclusion of sugarbeet pulp in cereal-based diets for fattening lambs enhances the ruminal environment by providing degradable fibre and so preventing acidosis. This is particularly important as the young lamb is still developing its digestive tract. To achieve high performance and encourage rumen growth lambs should receive a diet that ferments rapidly and does not lead to an accumulation of indigestible fibrous material in the rumen resulting in pot-bellied lambs.

Don’t let it get away on you
David Lewis

The cold spring has delayed the onset of grazing with very limited growth anywhere before mid-April. Grass is always hard to manage but the late start means the problems of the grass switch. This very easily grow quickly to make up for the slow start. A sudden rise in soil temperatures together with longer day length could easily make this possible. We must be prepared to manage fast growth if it occurs or grass could get too strong for grazing with vastege occurring. With low carryover silage stocks we need to use grass as possible in the clamp for next winter.

Grazing management must be flexible enough to cope with a sudden flush of grass. If growth is rapid then the grazing acreage needs reducing with the surplus grass at an early stage makes this process easier to manage. Different farm situations make for different solutions so for individual advice contact your rep or me, David Lewis.

Another means of maintaining grazing together with removing an unwanted crop of grass to grow some kale or a stubble turnip for feeding in mid/late summer and to ersake the aerial feed. This would help take the trick in mid-season period and help to ensure clamp stocks are full for next winter.

Pento-guard
David Lewis

Late last summer we launched our new silage additive (PENTO-GUARD), with a number of customers using it on second-cut grass, maize and whole crop silages. In an extremely difficult year, some analyses were very good and some salvaged reasonable crops in appalling conditions. So what are the benefits of using our silage additive? Silages are sweeter and more palatable resulting in higher dry matter intakes and improved milk yield. Yeast and mould growth is reduced, with reduced spoilage and heating at feeding out. Aesthetic stability is improved and protein retention increased. Also, PENTO-GUARD quickly creates an anaerobic state thereby improving DM recovery.

Ask your rep for more information or have a look at our website www.wjameson.co.uk